

Hans Knot International Radio Report November 2013

Welcome to this month's edition of the report with two more to come for this year. First of all thanks to the many people reflecting on the death of our dear Friend and Companion in the Radio Day team, Rob Olthof. All the many e mails and letters have deeply given us warmth and support, which is most appreciated. Radio Days and much more will be different without Rob. This month edition opens with a letter from Chet, which I got after the Radio Day in Erkrath (Germany), where I was this year in September for the very first time:

'Hello Hans, we were all very pleased that you, along with Martin van der Ven as two of the organizers of Europe's largest offshore radio event, the Radio Day in Amsterdam, joined in to take part in our comparably small get-together in Erkrath. We found the excellent review on your life as an expert in the field of broadcast history highly interesting and entertaining.

All in a very cheerful disposition, Ferry Eden's and Marc Jacobs' detailed retrospection on their lives and work on Radio Mi Amigo and Radio Caroline were another absolute highlight we enjoyed very much. It has been a terrific interview with so many interesting details and delightful moments. Also we feel honoured that in addition to Martin van der Ven, Graham Gill and Ferry Eden actively joining in to make the annual meeting a great experience, broadcasters like Herbert Visser, Dick Verheul and some of the newer internet stations like Radio Marabu, RNI and Paradiseradio.de, most of whom had been "on stage" in Erkrath before, revisit the event regularly giving us the chance for further interesting talks and find answers to further questions we have in regard to their experiences in the field of broadcasting and offshore radio in particular.

I am very pleased that you liked my presentation on the topic of Radio Sutch and Radio City. Please be assured that I found your comments very helpful indeed and not at all interfering as you feared. Apart from what I experienced myself I had to rely on historical investigation in the media, which can never be completely factual of course. The merger between Planet (Caroline) and Atlanta, for example, is differentially looked at and interpreted by the two parties, as is the amalgamation of Planet/Caroline and Radio City, with further different views and positions of Project Atlanta as the third party involved. So it is more than valuable to hear your opinion as an experienced broadcast historian.



Chet during his presentation in Erkrath
Photo: Martin van der Ven

As an early "anorak" (although this expression was unrealized in those days) I was fascinated by the cultural developments in the sixties, especially the "music revolution" which without doubt was considerably helped on by the offshore stations. In those days I set my alarm clock to 5.50 not to miss the daily opening of the programs of Radio Caroline and Radio Atlanta, and later listened to the Mike

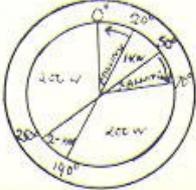
and Mandy Breakfast Show on K-I-N-G Radio before leaving for school, to the Gary Stevens Show on Radio City after school, to the EBC - Essex Beat Club - at night (after the strong Italian station closed down at 11 pm) and to all the larger stations like Caroline, London, 270, England/Britain and Scotland in between during the day. Apart from the fort based stations and Radio Atlanta (which I personally found a lot better than the early Caroline) my later favourites were Radio Caroline North, Radio 270 and Radio England. I remember that Radio 390 was a real power house and had the strongest signal of them all. Searching the dial for new "pirates" constantly I later heard Manx Radio one morning and was very surprised to learn from their letter that they were the first official land based commercial station in Britain with an output power of a mere 50 watts. They also stated that my letter was first forwarded to the better known Caroline North by mistake before it reached them.

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FROM **MANX RADIO**

FREQUENCIES : 232M (1295 KC/S) DAYLIGHT
188M (1594 KC/S) DARKNESS
89 MC/S V.H.F., THROUGHOUT

PRESENT HOURS OF TRANSMISSION 0700 - 2000

Although my parents would have preferred that I attended their annual summer holidays in Tyrol they finally agreed that I could visit their friends in Maida Vale "to improve my English" as I told them, a visit which became regular over the years. Improving my knowledge of the English language was the perfect excuse to travel from London straight to Whitstable and Herne Bay to listen to Radio Sutch and later to visit the offices of Radio City and Radio Caroline

and collect some souvenirs. After joining the Screaming Lord Sutch and The Savages Fan Club their club secretary Jann suggested to go to the 2i's Coffee Bar to see the band which was another highlight featured during some of my summer holidays as this venue was the meeting point of many stars and people from the fast growing music industry. Unfortunately my request to visit Radio City on Shivering Sands was declined when I went to see their office at 7 Denmark Street, I had however the great opportunity to board a tender from Faversham Oare to see the Red Sands Fort, although I was not allowed aboard to visit Radio Invicta but had to stay on the boat to have a cup of tea instead which was not very easy to take for a boy who already had achieved that much but wanted more.

This adventure led to some complications with my host family because I had promised to return to Maida Vale in the late afternoon but had to wake them up at night instead which they took not very friendly in view of their responsibility for the son of their German friends, especially because the same had happened a couple of nights before due to my visits to the 2i's.

My parents, known to my somewhat "free life style", did not take this too seriously, but I had to rely on bed & breakfasts during the years to follow. Apart from that I suppose that my knowledge of English really did improve due to my imperturbably interest in offshore radio, maybe much more intense than if I had taken part in one of the many courses for exchange students which were offered at the time.

To see what has become of the old towers I found like-minded friends in Kurt Gohla and Freddi Schorsch (who sadly passed away recently) to arrange another trip to Red Sands in 2003. After the skipper who promised to take us out to the forts from Whitstable failed to turn up I remembered Faversham Oare and we actually found a fisherman there who made this possible and I could exactly relive my 60s trip from there.



David Sutch Photo: Soundscapes archive

Thanks again to Robin Adcroft who finally let us see Red Sands Fort from the inside in 2006 after he and his friends at Project Red Sands had put a lot of work and passion into finding a company to construct a new access system (Carillion, at that time Mowlem Marine) with platforms and ladders for the Southern Gun Tower. In the meantime they have succeeded in installing a new docking stage, and the first jungle walk to the next tower seems to be in progress. This is a wonderful project and I wish them every success in restoring the fort.



I hope I have not bored you to death with this story of my youth as I can imagine that there are lots of people with just the same experiences, but I thought you might like to know the background for preparing my presentation on Radio City.

Maybe I should add that my early interest in broadcasting led to opening of what might be the third land based pirate station after WMR and Radio North West in the early 70s and probably one of the very first shortwave stations broadcasting from Ireland, Time Radio International from Cahore (Co. Wexford) with our postal addresses in Eindhoven and Maastricht in the Netherlands.



In the 80s I acted as vice president for Henri Hot Hits, a licensed border blaster transmitting from Henri-Chapelle (Belgium) to North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany. Apart from pumping out the latest hits along with commercials and broadcasting interviews with singer-songwriters like Joan Baez and rock stars like Little Steven, we organised regular weekly dance nights in 3 local discotheques and sponsored various concerts by e.g. Front 242, Ina Deter and various regional bands. On Sundays our programmes were relayed by BIP - Bruxelles Inter Peripherique -, a station with a Californian Rock Format from transmitters and aerials atop the Sheraton Hotel in

Brussels, and also during late night hours by Radio Telstar International from the Baudouin Tower (Tour Baudouin) in nearby Gemmenich, a few meters from the German border. After the introduction of commercial radio in NRW many of our clients, like Olympic Airways and the Kaufhof Record Store, did not renew their contracts and Henri Radio stopped its operations after having been on the air for seven years. With the current regional legislation commercial radio in NRW is a matter for newspaper publishers and certainly monopolised.

I look forward to coming to the real large offshore radio event, The Radio Day in Amsterdam, next year. Maybe I'll get the chance to talk to Rick Michaels who wrote a very nice informative letter to me during his time on Shivering Sands. It would be very interesting to learn his view of the amalgamation of Radio City and the Caroline Organisation in 1965. Kind regards, Chet

Well Chet I've not only enjoyed your marvellous presentation in Erkrath, last September, but also read this story with much interest. Anyone who wants to reflect can write me at HKnot@home.nl and next to reflections it's always possible to write your own memories to me, which are always welcome to share with other readers.

<http://cruisinradio.tk/> is one of the internet radio stations one of the readers has sent in to give a mention.

Another update of the photo page at Jingleweb.nl bringing interesting, not seen before, photographs from the early Veronica days: <http://www.jingleweb.nl/index.php/2013/10/14/vroege-dagen-veronica/>

Well it's another two months to go to 2014 and we're counting down to March 22nd when a lot of the readers, including more than 70 former offshore deejays from sixties and seventies are coming to

Amsterdam to be there at the annual Radio Day. Almost from all continents of the world there flying in, including people from Australia, USA, Canada, Mexico and many European countries.



At www.radioday.nl you can see the scheduled program starting with an American Documentary. Do you want to know more about that, just read the next few lines written in from the USA producer:

'Way back in 1989, an excellent professor told me about the radio pirates of the Netherlands--then and now. I thought, "Wow! Pirates have taken over! I have to meet them." A mere 23 years later, my sabbatical brought me to Amsterdam, Groningen, Hilversum, London, the Thames, and other communities to interview Hans Knot, Ad Bouman, Hans Hogendoorn, Tineke, Herbert Visser, Bob Noakes, Keith Skues, Johnny Walker, Tony Prince, and other very helpful giants on the subject. Two excellent students and my wife joined me in shooting a video documentary. Now, on RadioDay 2014, the subjects of my documentary get to play critic -how intimidating - and we get to go back to the Netherlands. I hope my documentary is as kind to my hosts as they were to me. Wayne Hepler Professor

Baltimore, Maryland USA.'

Well Wayne it will good to see you there and hopefully the attenders will give you a warm welcome. Seeing the list of people you've interviewed I think most of them will attend the RadioDay too.

Roger Stafford from Australia was writing me that he lost contacts: I have been reading via your web site. Well, I have to add Chris Minter (Chris Cortez) and Dave Caine (Gammon) to my no longer contactable list. Dave had been driving taxi's around the Newmarket Suffolk area but on asking my Mum, she had not seen him for ages.'

Well Roger, Chris Minter has always been a fanatic radio follower till six years ago, when suddenly his interest flooded away. However I'm still in contact with him and have already send you his personal contacts. I think, since you've gone to Australia, he changed houses. Dave Caine is not known personally by me, but surely Chris knows how to inform you.



Chris Cortez and Hans Knot in the eighties
Photo: Rob Olthof

But Roger had more to tell: 'A bit of news from Melbourne as the old Crawford studios, of neighbours fame and of course the Aussie connection to Radio Caroline has just had a bulldozer threw it. It was located in Boxhill Victoria for many years and is now gone. Crawford's dad's house in Mont Albert no longer has the three element beam on the roof. This is one of the most expensive streets in Melbourne. Ok Hans, take care, I'm 60 now! We had some fun. Roger Stafford'.

The next step brings us from Australia to New Zealand. As the producer of the new offshore movie '3 Mile Limit' promised us to send the teaser for the movie, so here we go, with thanks to Craig:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQ9ajV-3b8U>

Well here's an interesting story I got in mid-October from a guy in the USA: 'Greetings Hans! I have a question/request, but I have to give you a little background info first. Over this past weekend, I heard Radio 6150 replaying a recording of Radio Northsea International on 6070 kHz. I sent an e-mail report to Radio 6150 and the operator, Mr X, passed it along to Hardy Schracke, who has been apparently doing a German show on a webcast version of RNI. Hardy had mentioned in an e-mail to me that he met and was in contact with Graham Gill of the old RNI. I asked Hardy for Graham's e-mail address, but he said he lost it when his computer crashed. I noticed that you've been a big part of the 'Radio Days' gathering and close to all the old guys from the offshore days. I was hoping that you had Graham's e-mail address and could pass it along please. The reason is that I was lucky enough to hear RNI several times in 1977 and would simply like to get a QSL verification. I guess that was towards the end of RNI, and getting reception verification after all these years would be very special. So, if you can help in any way, I'd really be most grateful.

When I heard RNI, they were off the Libyan coast just 2 months before the Libyans took over the Mebo 2 and were playing the old 'test transmission' announcement at close down. That was in August 1977 on 6205 kHz. By the way, I heard RNI from my home here in Dunlo, PA, USA. From what I've seen, RNI wasn't the most difficult station to hear on this side of the Atlantic, but not easy either. Since I had only been in the shortwave listening hobby for about a year and a half at that point, hearing RNI was a big event! OK Hans, I surely hope you can help with a verification of RNI, or can provide Graham Gills e-mail address (or anyone else on the old RNI staff). I look forward to your reply. Thanks a lot! Dave Valko Dunlo, PA, USA.'



RNI off the coast near Tripoli 1977. Archive: Freewave Media Magazine

Well I answered Dave and forwarded the mail to Graham as well as Robin Banks, as Robin was doing the test programs. I also advised him some internet site. He came back with:

'Very nice Hans!! Your website at www.hansknot.com was what spurred me to send you the e-mail earlier today. So yes, I did see the website. Good job! Thanks for passing along my e-mail to Graham. I certainly hope he replies. At the time I heard RNI, I wasn't that knowledgeable or experienced, so to be honest I didn't realize what an eventful reception it was until many years later. Had I been living in Europe, I'm sure it would have been different. I'm just very glad I kept my recording. Even today, hearing 'The Man of Action' theme song takes me back to those long ago days in August of 1977.

A little more information for you: I've been interested in European Pirates just about as long as I've been listening to SW. Of course they're rather difficult to hear on this side. I started getting a little more serious about looking for them in the late 80's. But it wasn't until 2000 that I really took the plunge going out in the middle of the night on Sundays to catch the broadcasts from an electrically quiet spot where I could lay out antennas aimed at Europe. I don't know how many I've heard but it was around 130 when I got curious and did a count a couple years ago.

It's wonderful news you've also send it to Robin Banks Hans! I was just wondering who made those final transmissions. Thanks so much for your help. I hope that Robin replies. Please tell him and Graham that I could send them a short MP3 audio recording if they like. Then again I'm sure they're probably tired of hearing the 'Man of Action' already!

I might add another bit of information about my reception from 1977. At that time I was corresponding with another shortwave listener here in Pennsylvania, Brian Alexander. Brian lived about 150 km away. It was the usual correspondence which also included an exchange of stations that we were hearing then. In one of his letters, one of the stations he said he heard was RNI. He also

included a cassette with the recording. That was how I learned RNI was broadcasting from off the Libyan coast and could be heard here in the states. So of course I tuned in and the rest is history as they say! When I went away to school, our correspondence ended. We both continued listening to shortwave over the years but never picked up our correspondence again despite the fact that we both still lived in Pennsylvania. A year or 2 ago I did send Brian an e-mail and he replied, but it never amounted to anything other than "hello old friend, how are you doing". Then, earlier this year I learned through the grapevine that Brian had passed away last December! I was shocked and saddened. Without Brian's tip about RNI, I probably would never have heard them. Take care and 73! Dave Valko.'

Well very interesting to read Dave and keep us informed about the response you will get. By the way if any reader wants to tell his or her own story don't forget to write to HKnot@home.nl

Beolit 40, 1940 is a wonderful old-timer in the field of radio equipment. It's from the Danish factory Bang and Olufsen. Martin van der Ven found a copy while on travel in Denmark. It led to searching on the net and he advised me to have a look on the next interesting site:

<http://www.bangandolufsenhistoryproducts.dk>

I've visited through the years a lot of radio station which had connection with offshore radio. Stations like EKR, CRM, Capital Radio and many more. Well a view at the photos I took when being there can be done at www.hansknot.com

Recently I got an e mail from Ross (Freddie Beare on Caroline North in 1968) in which he suggested the ship was towed to Scheveningen in March 1968. I answered him with: 'Hi Ross, well the ship was ordered to go to Amsterdam by the authorities but made a short stop in the harbour of IJmuiden and not Scheveningen. From Scheveningen it's

not possible to go further inside the canals, only two harbours are there. From IJmuiden to Amsterdam it's possible to go further to Amsterdam, what they did through the so-called 'Noordzeekanaal'. With best wishes Hans'



Ross Brown on Caroline North International
Photo: Archive Ross Brown

Ross came back with: 'Hans, I understand what you are saying and it makes sense. But I wonder if the ship did not also stop at Scheveningen? I know for a fact that the ship sheltered for about 48 hours at the Isle of White, due to bad weather and because of the difficulty with the tow caused mostly by the large number of barnacles that had gathered over time on the hull of the M.V. Fredericia/Caroline.

I do not have any evidence to support my point and my wife has passed away so I am unable to confirm with her but Scheveningen has a place in my memory. Time of course can be the reason for this, maybe over time I have convinced myself about the Scheveningen stop. I remember that we arrived at a small dock late at night and waited until early morning before continuing the journey to Amsterdam. The Radio Caroline staff was told very little of what was taking place on the ship during the seizure. After the boarding party,

which was armed, the crystals were removed from the transmitter. I don't remember being informed of anything other than that the ship would most likely be towed to the Netherlands in the next 24 hours. Apart from that we found out most of the details by listening to the BBC news. I look forward to meeting you next year, best regards, Ross Brown.'

Well indeed an interesting story and hopefully one of the former colleagues can tell us more about it. See you in March, will be great!

Next I did was writing to Roger Scott as I remembered he was talking once on the subject with much details. Here's what he answered: 'First of all, Hans, to the Isle of Wight! On Thursday March 7th, four days after the Sunday - when, at 1810, we left the anchorage (or the site of the anchorage) - I wrote in my diary that visibility was relatively clear and that the Island of Wight was quite visible. However, it was on the Tuesday evening that we started sailing back in the direction from where we had come, because of gales ahead.

At 1015 on Wednesday morning, I awoke to find that we were still sailing in the 'wrong' direction, and as the day wore on the gales were getting worse and worse; the coming night was "a bloody rough one". The weather must have improved considerably by Thursday lunchtime, for that is when a replacement tug, Titanic, took over, albeit that "the wind just keeps howling". The shipping forecast was discouraging, though, with force 8 and force 9 to expect in the near future.

Ross says that the Fredericia spent 48 hours sheltering at the Isle of Wight, so it must've gotten quite a move on between the Wednesday morning and Friday morning, when I wrote "We are actually on the move again and [late morning] we were coming up to Dover". Incidentally, we had already reached Lands End by early on the Monday evening.

On the day that we were towed away, I wrote that 'apparently [Manx Radio] hadn't noticed they were on their own now', but ITV news did report in the evening that both Caroline ships had been towed away. On the Monday, 'reports are that Mi Amigo is already in Amsterdam harbour'. On Tuesday, any news coverage had dried-up, also I reckoned I might go insane, as one does on such a frustrating odyssey.

Don Allen and I had met for the first time ever when I climbed aboard the ship on 28th of February and I clearly found the guy interesting: I wrote on Wednesday 6 March (as we were sailing in a westerly direction instead of easterly), 'Don keeps well out of the way during daytime; his prowling time is at night'. Nothing had changed when I had the pleasure of working with him at sea again in 1973!

On Thursday: 'We are now out of fresh milk and eggs''Hang this, there's no heat in my cabin now!' On Friday? Don Allen again. He was celebrating today his third anniversary of working for Caroline. Late night booze ahoy. Oh well, at least we had some alcohol.'

At about 1500 on Saturday we reached IJmuiden, where customs officials boarded for usual formalities. We spent about an hour in the locks, then sailed the canal to the quay just outside Amsterdam, finally tying up at around 1900. Here, George Hare was doling-out £5 notes, 'cheques promised for later' (a promise kept). He also bought air tickets for all.

What's the point of keeping a diary if you can't journey back 45 years every so often? Best wishes from Greg. Looking forward to seeing Ross Brown next year.'



Fredericia on tow. Photo: Archive Monitor Magazine

What a most interesting and detailed report of the journey to IJmuiden. Thanks a lot Roger Scott for bringing it to my readership and of course it will be good seeing the both of you in Amsterdam in March 2014.

Of course I did sent this wonderful explanation to Australia and so Ross Brown came back with: 'Thanks Hans, It was fascinating reading Roger's diary account, I have forgotten so much of what actually happened on the ships and also with Radio City and Radio 390. In my youth I tended to live day to day but I enjoyed each minute. Offshore radio was a fabulous adventure. Only wish I had been more into diaries and photos. But I am expecting/hoping for the memories to come flooding back when there will be a meeting of the people and

minds in March next year. It will be great to meet with fellow 'Pirate Jockeys' and colleagues. I think the whole idea of the 'Radio Day' is shaping up to be a large success and the brains behind it need to be congratulated. Please give Roger my best regards.

I wonder if you or anyone have heard from one of the techies who worked on Radio City. I remember his first name Graham/Graeme (spelling might not be right and I cannot recall his last name) and he was an Aussie. He and I had a car adventure through Europe as we took two Aussie girls to Italy to catch a ship for their return to Ausieland. We purchased an old Jaguar just for the trip and sold it 10 days later when we got back to the UK. Ross Brown.'

Well Ross I've forwarded the last question to a former Radio City member, so who answered as follows: I can't recall his other name off hand but there was a Graham and he was a cook. Technicians were: Tony Pine and Paul Elvey mostly heavy engineering and generation plant. Don Witts, Johnny Evlin and Dick Dixon early radio technicians. Ian West was Senior Transmitter Engineer and Phil Perkins Studio Engineer. Trust that helps - Bob LeRoi'.

Well Bob thanks a lot and success with the rebuilding!

And let's not forget to give Jon Myer some space: 'I have just updated The Pirate Radio Hall of Fame.

New last month and this month:

- Laser-558 DJ Jeff Davis opens his photo album to share some great pictures taken on board the mv Communicator in 1985;
- Big L's Duncan Johnson celebrates his 75th birthday;
- correspondent Jonathan Shirley provides some vintage Radio 390 press cuttings;
- correspondent Stuart Aiken shares an audio montage of Radio Caroline South as it was in 1967;

- and, 46 years after the Marine Offences Act, Caroline's Johnnie Walker meets the architect of the law which turned him into an outlaw, former Postmaster General Tony Benn.
- On 14th September a commemorative plaque was unveiled outside the former home of Big L's Kenny Everett. We have pictures of the event and of the book launch that followed;
- and we review that book - a new Kenny Everett biography;
- we have archive photos of Radio Caroline's original ship mv Fredericia from the time of her launch as a Danish ferry, courtesy of Brian Thompson;
- correspondent Jonathan Shirley provides some Radio Tower / Tower Television press cuttings;
- model-maker René van den Abeelen announces the latest addition to his miniaturised broadcasting fleet;
- we link to the newly released trailer for '3 Mile Limit', a film about New Zealand's offshore station Radio Hauraki;
- and we pay our respects to Rob Olthof and John de Mol Sr., two important men in the world of offshore radio who sadly passed away recently.

My thanks, as always, to everyone who has contributed. At the time of writing, The Pirate Radio Hall of Fame has 558 'likes' on Facebook. That's a good piratical number. Thanks for your support. More next month. All the best, Jon

www.offshoreradio.co.uk

From Jon Myer I go to Andrew Emmerson from Northampton in England: Dear Hans, this is a first class article, with several nostalgic photographs. Subject: Happy 50th birthday, Compact Cassette

http://www.theregister.co.uk/2013/08/30/50_years_of_the_compact_cassette/

And from the Netherlands it is Meindert Dikboom about listening to nowadays AFN

<http://www.afneurope.net/tabid/2101/Default.aspx>

Some weeks ago I thought to annoy the Emperor Rosko a bit as I wrote to him: 'Well it must be an experience for you that the well-known offshore historian was interviewed yesterday at the German Radio Day in Erkrath and in the background was a photo from yours truly and Hans Knot'



Rosko came back with: 'I am beyond impressed! Did you arrange that?'

Well Rosko, as I was a guest there I hadn't any influence on that. But you had your name mentioned again as well as a new photograph! Till next month.



Here is another sad photograph: 'Hi Hans. I am indebted to Tommy Kirkpatrick of Orkney for taking and allowing me to use this sad picture of the remains of the Communicator in a lorry trailer ready to be shipped down to scrap men on the Scottish Mainland from Gills Bay in Orkney in June 2008.

This picture was originally posted on Ships Nostalgia April 18th this year. Truly it is a sad sight. I hope all is well with you and yours. Regards. Chris Faulkner.'

Thanks a lot Chris and indeed it is a very sad sight. Listening to the station for hundreds of hours gave me a lot of fun in the eighties and the ship has, afterwards, gone a long way to be finally scrapped at Orkney.

Next is Fons van Winteraeken from Limburg in the Netherlands, who is a follower of Radio Caroline in the period 1979/1980 and he knows more about that period than anyone else. He wrote: 'Hans, I was listening to a program from Rob Hudson on 31st of August 1979 and he presented his colleague Jeroen Woelwater as 'de Woel' reading the traffic information. So there you are another nick name for the long list.'

Thanks a lot and the complete list, till now, can be found on www.hansknot.com

Well we missed my visual handicapped friend Ian Godfrey last month and he reveals now the reason why: 'Hi Hans, after about six weeks without my hands-free software I'm really relieved that it's now back up and running again, courtesy of a local volunteer. I had to resort to using the keyboard the hard way again, and limited myself to fairly short e-mails, but now I can relax a bit, so I thought I'd send you a few lines.

The intention was to e-mail you pretty soon after the after the Dutch MOA anniversary. Veronica 192 and Offshore Radio Sounds covered Veronica's last seven days, mostly simulcasting (apart from a 15 second delay between the two!) I remember hearing a fair amount of the original and most of the rerun in 2009 so didn't listen too much of it this year. Each station ran a year-by-year feature on Veronica but didn't listen to much of that either, having also heard that a couple of times already. The British MOA was commemorated very well. I'd tuned to Veronica 192 around 08.00 BST to find a Radio England 855 test, followed by another on 227. I tuned in again about an hour later to find a Robbie Dale show from 1967, including a couple of announcements by Carl Conway.

There were a few other commemorative shows in the afternoon, but I made sure I was around at 19.00, for Roger Day on UnCool Radio. This really was the icing on the cake. He never disappoints. From somebody who was in at the sharp end there were a load of personal recollections and the whole program was devoted to records from 1967, with a good sprinkling of lesser hits and tracks I'd never heard before. On the Friday he continued where he'd left off. Apart from Veronica's last day 31st seemed fairly quiet, apart from a short RNI feature on Veronica 192 in the evening. They can be relied on each year to give good coverage of both the British and Dutch Acts. I wonder how much coverage there was on UK Internet

stations. The chances of coverage on mainstream radio, Dutch or British, are probably virtually zero.

A few days ago I read about the closing of Caroline's satellite service, which didn't surprise me that much and also the proposed new Internet station Caroline Extra. This sounds interesting. I'm looking forward to the next Report. Best wishes, Ian Godfrey.'

Well Ian thanks a lot for your special report into radio listening and it's always nice to read your 'hearings and ideas on the subject radio.' Next is a surprising e mail coming from England:

'Hi, just to let you know I am here and fortunately I am still alive and kicking. As well as being good advertising P.R for the Station I really did broadcast on Radio City and my show went out on Saturday mornings. Although it was short lived it was a thoroughly enjoyable time which changed and ended when Reg Calvert was murdered.

I have had a very varied life encompassing many careers and travelled extensively. I now own a Fancy Dress and Costume Hire Company in Hertfordshire. Radio City was such a long time ago but I remember my time there with great fondness and joy. So, I was sent your article by my cousin and I thought I would write to clear up your query and little mystery. Very best wishes, Lyn Bass Brimson

Thanks a lot Linda and it will good to be seeing you on the RadioDay too next March.



John de Mol Sr. aboard the MEBO II
Photo: Leon Keezer

Late September John de Mol Sr., once director of the Dutch Service from RNI, died at the age of 81. He started his career within the music industry as a singer and became very popular in the late fifties and early sixties of last century and even had a hit with Marty Robbins 'El Paso' in the Dutch chart. A song, which was later, from 1971 on, forbidden to be played by the Dutch deejays on the station.

His radio career started in 1961 when he presented a sponsored program for Radio Veronica, 'Lexie goes Dixie", which was sponsored by Lexington Cigarettes. Remember the jingle package from the same station: '192 een goed idee'? Well John de Mol was one of the jingle singers in 1965, when it was produced. In 1971 the Strengholt Company asked him to organise the radio team for Radio Noordzee, and he became the managing director on the station. He stayed in the company till the last day in August 1974. He became television director for the VOO, the Veronica Broadcast Organisation when it became an official licence late 1975. He also did a wonderful job when he was fighting for the rights of the Dutch musical artists, this as director of the Foundation Conamus. On September 27 he died after a long illness.

In last issue Robert Clancey promoted a movie shot in the sixties at Caroline's headquarters as well on the radio ships. He had never seen it before and wanted other to see it too on You Tube. I wrote to Robert that it was not so rare, as we played it on a RadioDay decades ago. But after the report was published it was Paul Graham who had additional information for us:

'Hi Hans, the black and white Radio Caroline film mentioned in the latest radio report is not at all rare. This film has been for sale via East Anglian Productions/Radio Fab for twenty years on video and was sold in 1965 to Radio Caroline club members for ten shillings. It was shown at my school by a boy who had bought the film at the time in 1965. That's when I first saw it. It was produced by soon to be Radio City DJ Paul Kramer, who would also have a short stint on Caroline North in 1967 but was killed in a traffic accident in London in 1968. I hope this helps to shed some light on this film..
Paul Graham.'

Thanks a lot Paul, most appreciated.

Well we go to Phil Champion, who brought us months ago in the Hans Knot Radio Report part 1 about the Scandinavian offshore radio stations. In last issue he already started with the history of Radio Mercur. This time he takes us in part 2b to Radio Mercur.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN ABOUT THE SCANDINAVIAN PIRATES?-

Part 2 b- Radio Mercur

Philip Champion

The structure of Radio Mercur to get round Danish laws was copied by subsequent offshore stations for Sweden, Holland and Britain. A holding company, Internationale Mercur Radio Anstalt, was set up in

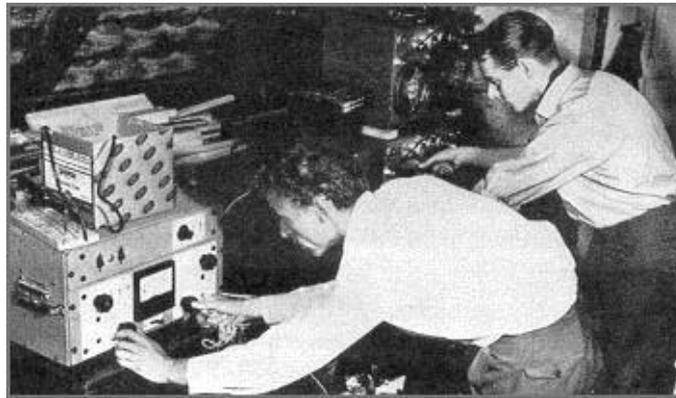
Liechtenstein by a Swiss lawyer, Hr. Flachsmann. This company hired the Panama-registered ship 'Cheeta'. The production of programmes and advertisements, plus advertising sales were run by a company, Mercur Reklame, in Denmark.

The sales company was set up by Vagn Jensen. On the radio-mercur.dk website Hans Dencker wrote in with his memoirs. As a new 'advertising consultant' he found that the others didn't want to share customers with him. So he asked Jensen for the card file of companies who had *not* shown interest on advertising on Mercur while he worked there. For De Danske Spritfabrikker (Danish Distillers) he decided to commission two versions of a song for them to choose even though it was normal to do so *after* agreement to advertise had been made. The unsuspecting production department did one version with Palle Huld (a Dane born in 1912 who was involved in acting and theatre production) and another by Gunnar Lauring, a Danish actor born in 1905 who had over 30 years in the theatre, on film and in radio plays. The Distillers' advertising manager heard the recordings then immediately contacted the Chief Executives who chose the Gunnar Lauring version. Next he went to a new travel firm Spies Rejser which had a limited budget. Dencker was successful in proposing that Spies share promotion with existing advertiser the Freddy Hansen radio chain where the winner in Hansen's promotion got a trip with Spies.



Cheetah 1

From the start Mercur did not operate throughout the day; breaks around lunchtime and early afternoon were soon hired out to Skånes Radio Mercur. By New Year 1959 hours were 7.30 -9.30 am (Skånes Radio Mercur 11 am -2 pm) and 5 pm until midnight. A "typical schedule" for 1960 from the pia-charlotte website seems to show hours were 6 -9 am and 4 pm -12 midnight. It went: 6 am "Morgenmusik" (Morning Music), 7.05 "Go Morgen", 7.15 "Morgenmusik", 8 "Grønttorvstips", 8.30 "Copenhagen Today", 4 pm Inger Marie, 4.30 Non -stop, 5 "Melodi og Rytme" (Melody or Rhythm), 5.40 "Byens aften og programoversigten" (Town Tonight and Programme Guide), 6 "Pladenyt" (New Records), 6.15 "Lyt og slap af" (Listen and Relax), 6.45 "Information", 7 "Traditionel Jazz", 7.15 "Gamle træffere" (Old Hits), 7.30 "En stemme i mængden" (A Voice in the Crowd), 7.45 "Kendte vokalister" (Famous Vocalists), 8 "Pedro og (and) gramofonen", 9.30 "En håndfuld melodier", 11 "Musik til midnat."



Testing equipment Cheetah 1

After a few years Mercur wanted to increase broadcasting hours and the range of their broadcasts. They had also had trouble with the small ship in bad weather. So on January 31st 1961 they put the Norwegian ferry "Mosken" which they renamed "Cheeta II" into the "Cheeta"'s anchorage. This larger vessel had a red hull with white

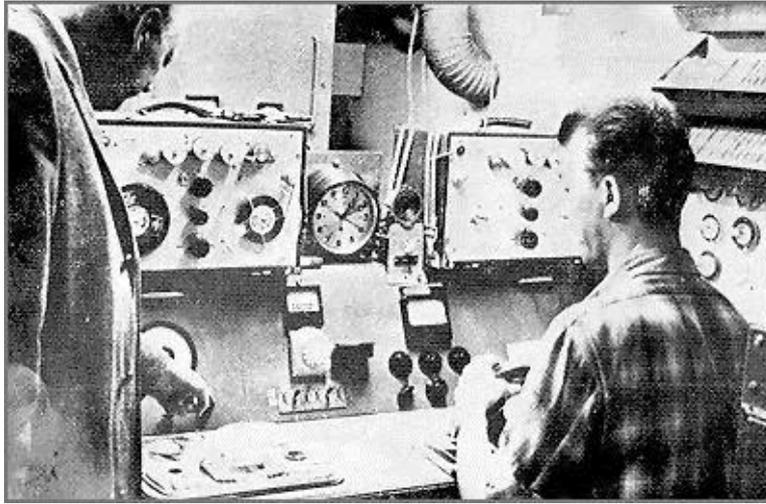
superstructure and 'Radio Mercur' painted on the deckhouse. It was more imposing with its two masts. The smaller ship went to a shipyard in Kristiansand, Norway for inspection. Paul Dane said that it was then leased to a Norwegian concern used to carry iron until the aerial was put back up that November. The 'new' ship had two new 10 kW transmitters built by Pedersen, one for 88 MHz and the other for 89.5. So now Mercur and Skånes Radio Mercur (which had taken the unused midday hours since 1959) could run separately all day. Mercur broadcast from 5.54 am -10 am/ 3.30 pm -midnight while Skånes Radio Mercur went out 7 am -8 pm and 11pm -midnight. Mercur was one of the first radio stations to broadcast in stereo. This went out from April 1st 1961 nightly (see below) sponsored by advertisers Bang & Olufsen who supplied some of the necessary technical equipment. Listeners needed two radios though -one tuned into each frequency!



One of the many caricatures in the newspapers

In 1959 there was even speculation about Mercur setting up a TV station. When asked about this by the "TV" magazine in 1959 programme secretary Jørgen Hansen replied that their executive board in Switzerland was considering it but to do it they would need a larger ship and bigger studios than the former Argentine embassy. Nothing came of this as far as Mercur was concerned.

Radio Mercur had its own logo which was on its publicity plus the superstructure of the "Cheeta II". It featured three concentric circles: the main one was red, then a smaller white one with the smallest being black on the far right. It looked like an eye. The announcers had titles for their programmes, as did the other Scandinavian pirates, early Radio Veronica, the early English pirates and others since. The idea of naming the show after the deejays seems to have started in the mid-sixties with some Top 40 or 50 stations. Here are some of the titles of Mercur announcers' regular shows with their meanings in English. Senior dj Lea Dalby had her Christian name in her show's title "Lea og lyset" (Lea and Light). Birgit David presented "Fra top til tå -vi snakker nyt tøj" (From Head to Toe -We're Talking New Clothes). "Skønhed stips -vi snakker kosmetik" (Beauty Tips) was introduced by Tove Grundtvig. Hannah Rahlff did "Ved du hvad, Mor" (You Know What, Mam). Turning to male announcers, Pedro Biker introduced "Teenagetimen ved Pedro Biker". Others didn't have their names in the title: Programme Director Niels Heilmann did "Rockprofessoren" (Rock Professor) and "Den nysgerrige mikrofon." Bjarne Hoyer was on "Grammogodter", Georg Kringelbach presented "Natekpressen" (Night Express), Poul Reinau was on "Mandagsklubben" (Monday Club) and Bjarne Rostvold did "Jazz causeri." John Steenberg was heard on "Mosaik" and "Perspektivkassen" (Perspective Box), Peder Syv (Per Wiking) did "Snaktuelt" while Hans Vangkilde was on the popular "Vækkeuret" (Alarm Clocks) with Preben Ploug by January 1959, "Nu kan det være nok" (Now That's Enough) and "Ugens Top-Ti" (Weekly Top 10).



Ib Hansen in studio Radio Mercur

A later schedule from Radio Mercur on 88.0 MHz gives a weekday line up: 6 am "Musik for de morgenfriske", 7 Tirsdags spiloppen, 9 "Vi spiller -De ta'r fat" (We'll play, you take hold), 10 "Lyt- i Helsingør", 2 pm "Eftermiddagsrytmer" (Afternoon rhythms), 4 "Jazz-land", 4.45 "Byens aften", 5.10 "Gaffelmusik" (Fork Music), 6 pm "Lyt-og slap af", 7 "For he's a jolly good fellow", 7.15 "Ugens radioquiz", 7.30 "Den fantastiske Al Hirt", 7.45 "Nina Simone spiller og synger", 8 "Gramm." 9-9.30 "En håndfuld melodier", 11 "English by music", 11.30 "Stars on Wings." In addition there were regional programmes for Jylland and Fyn on Tuesdays and Fridays. Tuesdays had 9 am "Lyt -i (listen in) Silkeborg, 10 "Lyt -i dense", 11 "Lyt i Vejle". Fridays had an hour from 9 am each of "Lyt -i Århus/Odense/Svendborg."

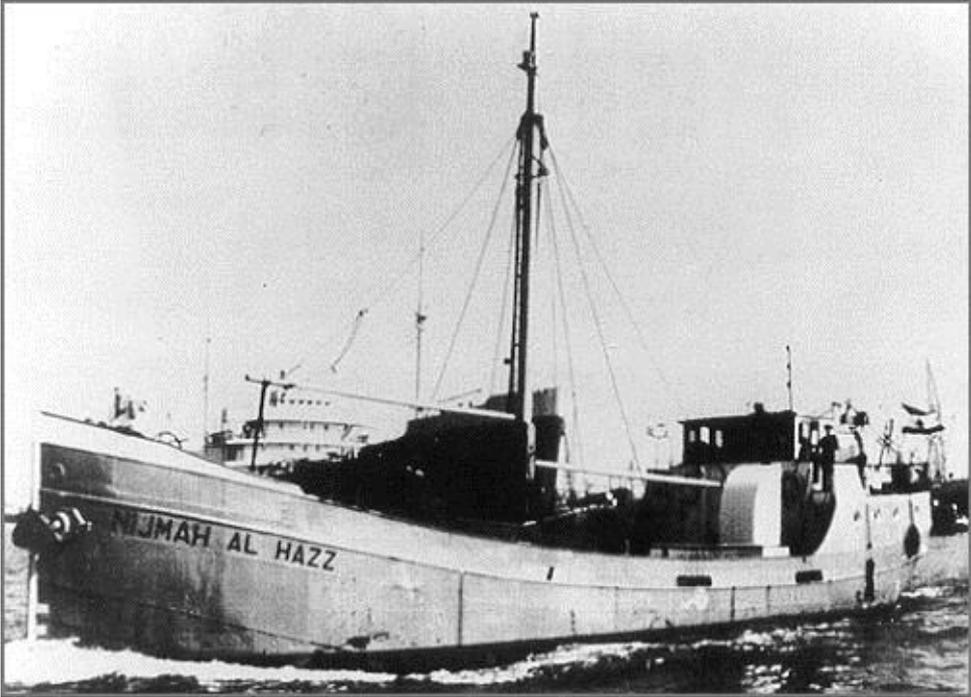
There were specialist shows on the station. As early as December 1958 you could hear the story and songs from "My Fair Lady" -all in Danish! Later "Jazz-lands" were on during the week, at least on Tuesdays at 4 -4.45 pm. "Gaffelmusik" on Tuesdays and Fridays at least 5.10 -6 pm featured folk music which was in vogue around that time in the UK, USA and elsewhere. Each week there was a 15 minute quiz at 7.15 pm on Tuesdays.

In September 1961 Radio Mercur had acquired a near neighbour as DCR, set up by disillusioned Mercur staff, started broadcasting from

the "Lucky Star." They wanted to make high quality programmes with a stricter policy on the commercial content. Mercur's response was to increase broadcasting hours to 6 -11 am and 2 pm until midnight. Almost nationwide coverage was obtained when the "Cheeta" was anchored in the Elefantgrunden in the Storebælt on November 25th 1961 covering Fyn and most of Jylland to complement the "Cheeta II" in the Øresund. On "Cheeta" two directional aerials beamed programmes to Århus in east Jylland and Odense in northern Fyn. Mercur now covered the east and centre of the country reaching some of the western part in Jylland. There had even been plans for a third ship to give proper nationwide coverage. It was realised after a week that the smaller vessel was unsuitable for the seas. Its aerial broke in a storm there on December 14th and so the two ships swapped anchorages. With the less powerful "Cheeta" near Sweden in her old Øresund anchorage it was back to Mercur and Skånes Radio Mercur sharing airtime. "Cheeta II" now in the Storebælt broadcast the same programmes as its smaller sister except for two and a half hours daily local programmes for Jylland and Fyn. Two copies were made of each programme with one taken out to "Cheeta" and the other transported by car to west Sjælland then taken out on a tender to "Cheeta II."

When DCR failed with low listener and advertiser response merger talks began in December. The two people blamed for the alleged decline in Mercur's standards, the main backer Ib Fogh and founder Peer Jansen, were forced out in January by those who had broken away to set up DCR. Heading the new combined station were Benny Knudsen, Børge Agerskov and the banker Alex Brask Thomsen. For all their dissatisfaction you might have expected changes in the station but it seems that Radio Mercur continued with the same style and programme structure as it had had since opening in 1958. Programme secretary Olav Bennike said that an official survey showed that Radio Mercur had 57% of all the listeners in the land. With such figures, outlawing the station would be undemocratic.

When the "Cheeta" ran aground during a gale in the Øresund on February 12th 1962 Mercur replaced it by the ex-DCR ship "Lucky Star". "Cheeta" had sent out a distress call and was towed in by a tug to the capital where it was impounded. Radio Mercur then sold it to Britt Wadner who had run the Skånes Radio Mercur side of the operation for Sweden. "Lucky Star" had an orange-red hull and a red wheelhouse.



Lucky Star

Next time more with thanks to Phil Champion

Just before closing this edition of the Hans Knot International Radio Report the next press report came in: 'The true story of Radio Caroline, the legendary pirate radio station broadcasting rock and roll from ships anchored off the British coast.'

From the team behind 'Sunset Strip' comes the true story of 'Radio Caroline,' the legendary pirate radio station that broadcast rock and roll from ships anchored off the British coast. Caroline defied the

establishment of 1960s England and fomented the British Invasion.

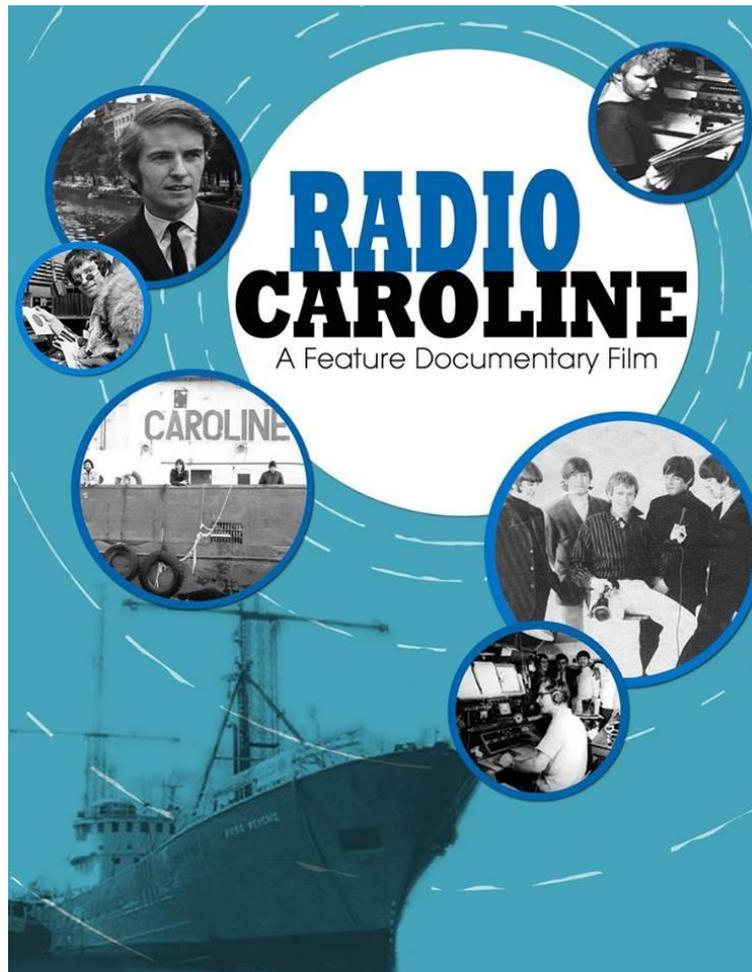
This documentary feature is directed by Hans Fjellestad (Moog, Sunset Strip) and produced by Joe Mundo (Sunset Strip, The Heart is a Drum Machine), Jamie Talbot (Sunset Strip), and Mike Witherill (Drinking Buddies, Fontera).

Despite storms, government threats, attempted military interventions, shipwrecks, and decades of misadventures and mishaps, Radio Caroline is somehow unsinkable. Caroline founder Ronan O'Rahilly muses, "The English are pirates - and always have been. Drake and Raleigh, supremacy of the seas and all that. Radio Caroline is a throwback to the good old buccaneering days and the public love us for that very reason."

But the government is not so thrilled. Original program director Tom Lodge explains, "We were out to sea on the airwaves broadcasting fun across the land. We were working hand in hand with the bands that were in the concert halls, together beating down the barricades of repression. The English Establishment was tumbling down."

Pirate radio broke the government's monopoly on UK airwaves and quickly found an audience of over 23 million loyal listeners who were hungry for great music that couldn't be heard anywhere else. Along the way, Radio Caroline made hits out of countless singles by bands like The Who, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd, The Kinks, Tom Jones, Donovan, Beach Boys, Bob Dylan, The Hollies, Stevie Wonder, Jeff Beck.

As Pete Townshend puts it, "For The Who, Radio Caroline was an angelic force. Pirates came to our rescue. Without Caroline we would not have sold a single record." And according to Paul McCartney, "Pirate Radio and in particular Radio Caroline, was a really exciting part of all of our lives in those days and summed up the spirit of the times culturally and musically."



Writer/Director Hans Fjellestad says, "Radio Caroline is about the dramatic changing of an era and the music that powered it. This is exactly the kind of story I love to dig into and put up on the screen."

"This film is very much about the music, but it's also filled with fascinating and eccentric characters. These guys launched some of the most iconic bands in the world during a very repressive time," adds producer Joe Mundo. Producer Jamie Talbot continues, "This is really an incredible story and I'm proud to be able to bring it to life."

Featuring never-before-seen images from the time, and rare concert performances from some of the biggest bands in rock music history, the film is set for release in 2014 to coincide with Radio Caroline's 50th Anniversary.

Well next month much more with all best wishes from me in the
Netherlands Hans Knot at HKnot@home.nl